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ABSTRACT

Nearly one-third of the European Community population of 320 million is involved daily with some form of education. The Community Education Action Programme celebrated its tenth anniversary in February 1986. The initial thrust was to increase mutual understanding and promote closer relations between the different education systems of member states. In response to the harsh economic and political realities of the late 1970s/early 1980s, the Community recognized the importance of additional commitments to tackle the growing problems of youth and unemployment. From the mid-1980s the priorities of the Programme have been influenced by the need for policies to develop human resources as an essential pre-requisite to cooperation within a People's Europe and to face the challenge of developing a European Technological Community able to compete with the United States and Japan. Chapters are: "Historical Development"; "Overview of the Education Programme in the European Community"; "Transition of Young People from School to Adult and Working Life"; "Equal Opportunities for Girls and Boys in Education"; "Education and Training of Migrant Workers and Their Families"; "The Teaching of Foreign Languages"; "The Introduction of the New Information Technologies"; "Cooperation in the Field of Higher Education"; "Information Exchange: EURYDICE, Study Visits, Conferences, and Seminars"; "Illiteracy"; "Handicapped Children"; "Europe in the Schools"; "Conclusions"; and "Information Sources". (Author/BZ)

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EUROPEAN COMMUNITY EDUCATION COOPERATION
THE FIRST DECADE

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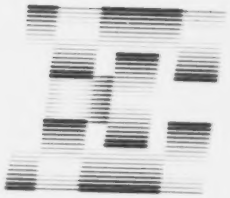

EURYDICE: The education
information network
in the European Community

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Introduction

Nearly one third of the European Community population of 320 million is involved daily with some form of education.

The Community Education Action Programme celebrated its tenth anniversary in February 1986. The main initial thrust of the Programme was to increase mutual understanding and promote closer relations between the different education systems of the Member States. In response to the harsh economic and political realities of the late seventies/early eighties the Community recognized the importance of additional commitments to tackle the growing problems of youth unemployment. From the mid-eighties the priorities of the Programme have been influenced by the need for policies to develop human resources as an essential pre-requisite to cooperation within a People's Europe and to face the challenge of developing a European Technological Community able to compete successfully with the USA and Japan.

"Europe will not be made at once, or according to a single, general plan. It will be built through concrete achievements, which first create a de facto solidarity". (Robert Schuman.)

"If I had to do it again, I would start with education".
(Jean Monnet.)

Historical development

Mr Robert Schuman

Mr Manuel Marin (Spain)
Vice-President of the Commission, responsible for social affairs, employment, education and training

1.1.1973: "Education" appears for the first time in the special responsibilities of a Member of the Commission.

February 1973: "Towards a European Education Policy"; a report by Professor Janne is welcomed by the Commission (Bull. EC. Supp: 10/73).

6.6.1974: The Ministers for Education meeting within the Council for the first time adopt a Resolution on Education Policy (OJ C98, 20.8.1974).

18.10.1974: The first meeting of the "Education Committee" is held (representatives of the Member States and the Commission with the Secretariat provided by the Council).

9.2.1976: The Council and the Ministers for Education meeting within the Council adopt a first Education Action Programme (OJ C38, 19.2.1976).

13.12.1976: The Council and the Ministers for Education meeting within the Council adopt a Resolution on measures to be taken to improve the preparation of young people for work and to facilitate their transition from education to working life. (OJ C308, 30.12.1976).

25.7.1977: The Council adopts a Directive on the Education of Migrant Workers' Children (OJ L199, 6.8.1977).

16.9.1980: EURYDICE, the education information network for education policy makers in the Community becomes operational.

March 1982: The European Parliament renews its call for Community action in the field of education (OJ C87, 5.4.1982).

24.5.1982: The Council and the Ministers for Education meeting within the Council adopt a Resolution on the implementation of a second series of pilot schemes for 1983/86 concerning the preparation of young people for work and to facilitate their transition from education to working life (OJ C193, 28.7.82). This programme was extended until 1987 by Resolution of 5.12.85 (OJ C328, 18.12.85).

2.6.1983: The Council adopts a Resolution concerning vocational training measures relating to new information technologies (OJ C166, 25.6.1983).

19.9.1983: The Council and the Ministers for Education meeting within the Council adopt a Resolution on the introduction of New Information Technology in education (OJ C256, 24.9.1983).

4.6.1984: The Council and the Ministers for Education meeting within the Council adopt Conclusions concerning:
- Technological change and social adjustment
- The teaching of foreign languages
- Pilot schemes relating to the education of migrant workers children
- The integration of handicapped children into ordinary schools
- Measures to combat illiteracy.

16.4.1985: The European Parliament adopts a Resolution concerning the Education of Migrant Workers' Children (OJ C122, 20.5.1985).

3.6.1985: The Council and the Ministers for Education meeting within the Council adopt a Resolution containing an Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Girls and Boys in Education (OJ C166, 5.7.1985) and measures to improve the European Dimension in Education.

5.12.1985: The Council comes to a political decision and agrees the COMETT (Community action programme for Education and Training for Technology) programme for four years: preparatory phase (1986), operational phase (1987-1989). (COM (85) 431-OJ, C234, 13.9.1985).

18.12.1985: The Commission forwards a Communication entitled "European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students - ERASMUS" to the Council (COM (85) 756-OJ, C73, 2.4.1986).

5.3.1986: The Commission forwards to the Council a Communication entitled "Proposals for a Council Decision adopting an Action Programme for the Promotion of Youth Exchanges in the Community - YES for Europe - 1987-89" (COM (86) 52-OJ, C72, 27.3.86).

Overview of the education programme in the European Community

The action programme in the field of education covers the following topics:

- The transition of young people from school to adult and working life.
- The education and training of migrant workers and their families.
- The teaching of foreign languages.
- Cooperation in the field of higher education, leading in 1985 to COMETT and ERASMUS proposals.
- Information exchange: EURYDICE, Study visits, Conferences and Seminars.
- The introduction of the new information technologies.
- The fight against illiteracy.
- Equal opportunities for girls and boys in education.
- The education of handicapped children.
- The training of teachers.
- Europe in the school curriculum.

This programme is complemented by the European Community Vocational Training Actions implemented with the technical assistance of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) in Berlin.

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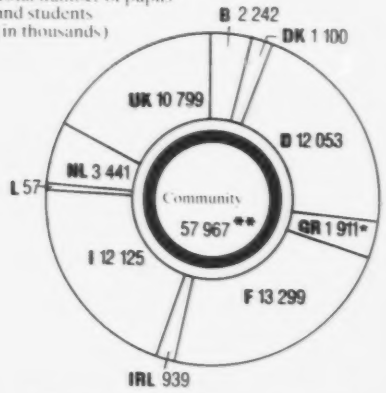
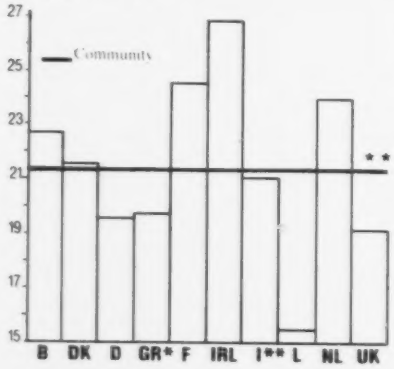
School and university education in the Community (1982-1983 academic year)

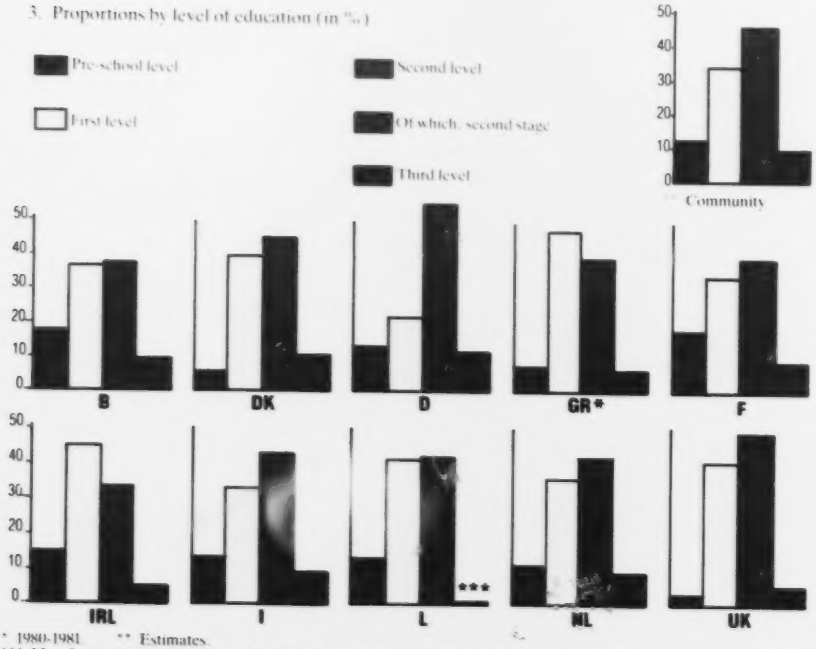
1. Total number of pupils and students (in thousands)



2. Proportion of pupils and students in total population (in ‰)



3. Proportions by level of education (in ‰)



* 1980-1981 ** Estimates

*** Most Luxembourg students go to higher education establishments in other Member States.

**** In several Member States large numbers of young people enter apprenticeships with an education component; these numbers are not registered in these statistics.

Source: Eurostat.

School and university education in Spain and Portugal

1. Total number of pupils and students (in thousands)

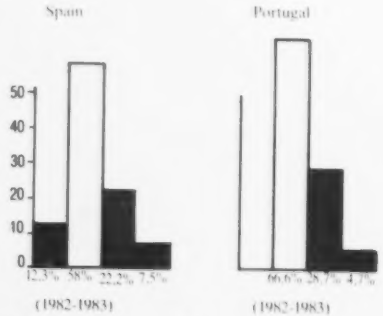
(1982-1983) Spain (Public + Private – pre-school included) **9.708**

(1982-1983) Portugal (Official and private/day and evening pre-school not included) **1.829**

2. Proportion of pupils and students in total population (in ‰)

Estimations:
Spain: **25‰** Portugal: **19‰**

3. Proportions by level of education (in ‰) 1982-1983



(1982-1983) (1982-1983)

Pre-school level	12.3	—
First level	58	66.6
Second level	22.2	25.7
Third level	7.5	4.7

Source: Gabinete de Estudios Estadisticos del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia

(Cabinet of statistical Studies of the Ministry of Education and Science.)

Source: Direcções Gerais de Ensino

(General Directorate for Education.)

Transition of young people from school to adult and working life

When young people leave school between the ages of 14 and 18 they go through a period of long and lengthening transition from childhood, without responsibilities and independent financial means, to adulthood and a job. This period is also important for other reasons: our socio-economic systems are structured in such a way that career choices made at this time are often virtually irreversible; society is moving into an epoch where industry and services are increasingly knowledge-oriented and it is during this period of a person's life that most knowledge and experience is developed; finally, this is the time when lack of privilege makes itself felt most acutely. The sharp rise in youth unemployment has deepened these problems by limiting job opportunities and further undermining the position of the unqualified and underprivileged. The importance of the content and quality of education and training during this period of transition cannot be overemphasized. To face up to this challenge, the Community adopted a new approach and new methods.

The December 1976 resolution established a programme of pilot projects which aimed to analyse specific problems and study possible solutions. A second programme covered the period 1983-87. The objectives of the two programmes were identical: to encourage young people to obtain professional qualifications, to give them a clearer conception of working life, and to develop their sense of initiative and creativity. Crucial elements in these programmes were close cooperation between all involved in education, the opening up of schools to representatives of trade unions and industry and the achievement of a closer identity beetween school courses and professional needs. The scale of the 30 pilot projects undertaken in the Community countries ranged from a group of schools to entire administrative regions. Most were district-based, since the first programme emphasized the importance of local initiatives.

In a June 1983 resolution setting broad guidelines for vocational training in the 1980s, Member States

promised to do their utmost to ensure that all young people could benefit from at least six months and if possible one year of full-time vocational training at the end of compulsory education. Special attention was also to be paid to the least qualified.

These measures supplemented other Community initiatives designed to combat youth unemployment and to support training programmes particularly through cash aid from the European Social Fund which currently devotes 75% of its resources to people aged less than 25.

Equal opportunities for girls and boys in education

Throughout the Community national legislation enshrines the principle of equal opportunities for men and women. Legislation notwithstanding a number of practical barriers remain to its achievement in reality, and the Community has acted in many ways to try to remove them. In particular, the Community is actively promoting equality between girls and boys at school, following the adoption by the Council and Ministers of Education of the 1985 Resolution on this subject, which aims to ensure equal access to all types of education.

The Treaty of Rome and a number of Community directives enshrine the principle of equality of job and training opportunity for men and women, but education and the job preferences of young people are burdened with sexual preconceptions. Girls are under-represented in technical courses, and higher education and often aim for so-called "women's jobs" which carry a high risk of unemployment and low pay.

The Community action programmes (1982-85 and 1986-90) for equal opportunities for women lay great emphasis on vocational training and guidance. Action is taking place to diversify job choices for girls, their training in new technologies and for a better supply of information on their training rights.

About 37% of beneficiaries from the European Social Fund training projects are women. The Fund gives priority to the training of women who wish to take up new professions or jobs where women are traditionally under-represented.

Education and training of migrant workers and their families

The free movement of workers is one of the fundamental principles of the Treaty of Rome. The children of workers who have moved to another Member State to work form an increasing proportion of the school population in some countries. The failure rate amongst such children remains high and they often find problems in integrating into the schools and society of their host country.

The 1977 Community directive on the schooling of children of migrant workers asks Member States to set up reception classes, specialized training for teachers and education in the language and culture of their country of origin. In adopting this directive, Member States gave a political commitment to extend its terms, as far as possible, to the children of migrant workers from non-Community countries.

Since 1976 the European Commission has financed and coordinated pilot projects to improve reception and teaching methods. Experiments in progress include improvements to teaching materials, the cross-cultural training of teachers, and the integrated teaching of the children's language and culture of origin.

There are also a number of projects to assist the reintegration of children returning to their home countries.

The European Social Fund also finances national training programmes for language and specialist teachers.

The teaching of foreign languages

The construction of Europe inevitably depends on the language ability of its citizens, to ease their free movement - a priority Community objective - as well as to promote cultural, economic, technical and scientific cooperation between Member States. In June 1984, the Member States gave new impetus to this campaign by committing themselves to:

- encouraging the acquisition of a working knowledge of two languages apart from the mother tongue before the statutory school leaving age;
- promoting visits by language teachers to the country of the language they teach;
- creating information centres to provide teachers with data on teaching methods and materials and the experience of other Member States. The European Commission, for its part, is to organize study visits and regular meetings on language teaching methods and practices.

The network of specialized information centres in the Member States is being activated and supported by the Commission with the assistance of the EURYDICE European Unit.

The introduction of the new information technologies

The new technologies have had a profound impact on the Community. Their demand for new skills and behaviour patterns has to be met without causing the social disruption feared by many. Education and Training must form the bedrock of any strategy designed to strengthen the innovatory capacity of industry in the face of a growing need for highly-qualified personnel. New approaches to basic and continuous training are required. The success of efforts to reshape industrial and research and development policy are at stake.

Community action in this area has been based on two Council resolutions of June 1983, concerning the introduction of new information technologies in education and in vocational training and the conclusions of the Education and Social Affairs Councils of June 1984 following a Commission communication on technological developments and social change.

Teachers in particular have been given an opportunity to familiarize themselves with new teaching technologies at "Summer Universities" organized at Nice, Liège and Gent by the Commission with the Member States. Various seminars and conferences have greatly stimulated the exchange of experience. They include:

- Marseille (1983) - European Seminar on the new information technologies and teaching
- Newcastle (1984) - The new information technologies and teaching software
- Bologna (1985) - The new information technologies and the training of teachers
- Berlin (1985) - The new information technologies in secondary and vocational education
- Enschede (1986) - The new information technologies and computer-assisted learning.

EURYCLEE, a network of specialized information services, with at least one unit in each Member State has been established, activated and supported by the Commission assisted by the EURYDICE European Unit to encourage a sharing of experience by practitioners in all Member States.

Cooperation in

Travel has always contributed to the education of young people and the Community has emphasized for many years the importance of giving students a chance to study outside their own country. Universities have long set an example of cultural and educational collaboration across European frontiers, but there are still many barriers to the movement of students within the Community: financial problems, difficulties of integration into a foreign society and doubts surrounding the recognition of foreign diplomas.

Since 1976 the European Commission has encouraged Member States to remove restrictions on numbers of foreign students and financial and administrative barriers to their admission to courses, and to the academic recognition of their diplomas. Heads of State or Government gave new commitments in this area at their Fontainebleau summit in June 1984. A network of information centres dealing with problems of academic recognition already exists to give detailed advice to parents and students. There is also a widely read students' guide, published and frequently updated by the Commission, which has greatly improved access to information on higher education courses in other Member States.

The Community subsidizes "joint

the field of higher education

study programmes" which improve cooperation between universities in different Member States by promoting visits and exchanges between teachers and students. This idea has been a great success. Since 1976 more than 600 study programmes have been launched involving more than 500 centres of higher education.

The Commission gives grants to higher education teaching staff for short study visits to improve their knowledge of other education systems.

The Commission's Communication to the Council - ERASMUS "European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students" - builds on cooperation already established and is designed to increase the mobility of students over the next six years.

The main objectives of ERASMUS are:
- to permit an ever increasing number of students to experience a period of study and residence in another Member State.
- to create a pool of graduates possessing direct experience of European cooperation on which to base further intensive economic and social collaboration.
- to reinforce the concept of the People's Europe.
- the development of a European Community University network of 1,700 institutions by 1989.
- to increase mutual recognition of diplomas and periods of study.

The Community programme for Education Training and Technology, "COMETT", also plays its part in increasing European Community Cooperation to enable Member States to compete technologically with the USA and Japan by pooling their efforts to link universities with industrial and commercial concerns in the European Community.

Agreed in principle by the Council, COMETT aims to:
- assure the development of high level human resources as a complement to the Community's broader technological programmes such as ESPRIT.
- encourage exchange of experience and pooling of resources with associated economies of scale.
- signal new priorities and manpower deficiencies stimulating progressive human resource development.

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Information exchange: EURYDICE, Study Visits, conferences and seminars

The diversity of the education systems in the Community is a source of wealth which must be preserved. But it is in everyone's interest to draw on the experience and achievements of neighbouring countries. Community action aims to improve mutual awareness of different forms of education and to encourage exchanges between national regional and local officials. Significant results have been obtained:

- The Commission has developed an extensive range of contacts with national education services, teachers' unions and associations, university principals and parents.
- The availability of information and documentation on developments in education policy in Member States has been considerably improved, thanks to the creation of the EURYDICE information exchange network in September 1980. This system allowed national and Community officials to build up a fund of information on education policies through the exchange of questions and answers. Since 1982, this network, the first of its kind in Europe, has pursued an active policy of diffusing information to a wider public.
- The network is made up of at least one information unit in each Member State activated by the Commission with the technical assistance of the European EURYDICE Unit in Brussels. This unit works closely with CEDEFOP, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training in Berlin.
- Informal contacts between teachers have been considerably improved, through conferences and meetings on subjects such as social change, demographic problems, educational methods for different age groups and the adaptation of teaching methods and materials to modern needs.
- Study visits organized with Community financial assistance have placed teachers in direct contact with teaching developments in other Member States.

In addition, the European Commission works closely with international organizations which take an interest in educational problems, such as the Council of Europe, OECD and UNESCO.

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Location of the information centers of the:
Glasgow
Edinburgh
Dublin
Coventry
London
Den Haag Zoetermeer
Enschede
Kobenhavn
Berlin
Bruxelles
Marburg
Bonn
Paris
Luxembourg
Bologna
Firenze
Roma
Coimbra
Lisboa
Madrid
Athinai
Eurydice Network
Euryclee Network (new information technologies)
Naric Network (higher education)
Network on the teaching of foreign languages
CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training)

19

Illiteracy

Illiteracy is a serious problem in all Community countries. Alongside basic illiteracy there is also a problem with regressive illiteracy or practical illiteracy caused, amongst other things, by the decline in reading brought about partly by new methods of communication such as radio and television.

Educationalists are in the forefront of the struggle for literacy even though this social phenomenon has complex origins. In June 1984, European education ministers asked the Commission to organize information exchanges on this issue. They also undertook to:

- Modify teaching practices to help the least-privileged children;
- Improve writing, reading and communication techniques in primary schools;
- Provide permanent or travelling libraries for the young;
- Rethink the basic and refresher training of teachers;
- Promote adult anti-illiteracy campaigns;
- Develop tele-teaching with the help of television companies.

Handicapped children

Between 5% and 9% of Community citizens are mentally or physically handicapped to some degree. Handicapped children form a not insignificant proportion of the school population.

- Since 1974 the European Social Fund has helped to finance the vocational training of the handicapped. The international year of the handicapped in 1981 led to a major review of Community action and led to a Council decision to launch a programme for the social integration of handicapped people.

  This programme covered education in schools and vocational and subsequent training. It is operated by the European Commission's Action Bureau for Handicapped People.
- The Community also supports a series of experimental projects on integration in schools, exchanges between young people and the transition of handicapped young people to working life.

Europe in the schools

The interest of young people in European affairs is such that 70% of them complain that they are insufficiently informed about Community developments. As citizens of Europe and future electors of the European Parliament, they ought not to leave school without a minimum understanding of Community issues and the way of life in other Community countries. The European Community cooperation therefore:

- encourages plans to promote European study courses in schools and helps European associations active in this area;
- organizes the distribution of European geographical maps in schools;
- provides literature through its information services specially written for young people and distributed through schools;
- supports a range of European documentation centres and European study institutes.

In addition, the European University Institute in Florence, opened in 1976, provides courses for postgraduate students researching the historical, economic, legal and socio-political background of European developments and institutions.

Conclusions

European cooperation in education has covered many fields in its first decade, and seen many landmarks. It is important to highlight in terms of lasting achievements:

- the existence of a Community framework for cooperation and exchange of experience in education
- the recognition of the need to consider the European dimension in the formulation of education policy
- the multiplication of projects and programmes across the Community, with ever-increasing cooperation amongst the Member States.

In the European Community of today, increasing importance is attached to the development of the human resources necessary to build and reinforce the People's Europe which is the basis of the Community itself.

The need for young people in particular to experience life in other Community countries than their own, and to gain knowledge and understanding of other languages and cultures, is the cornerstone on which a People's Europe will be built and a fundamental element of Community programmes in the education field.

It is upon young people that the future of the European Community depends and Community cooperation to enable them to draw on the rich educational diversity of the Community will only increase in importance over the coming years.

Information sources

Readers wishing to have more information on any of the topics mentioned above may contact the EURYDICE European Unit in Brussels, at rue Archimède 17 (bte 17), B-1040 Brussels.
Readers wishing for detailed technical information on Higher Education Cooperation may contact the Office for Cooperation in Education, 51 rue de la Concorde, B-1050 Brussels.
Readers wishing for detailed information on the Community Programmes "Transition from School to Adult and Working Life„ may contact the Programme Information Office IFAPLAN, Square Ambiorix 32, B-1040 Brussels.

Eurydice Information Units

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